Secession

On December 20, 1860, six weeks after Lincoln's election as president, South Carolina's leaders met in the banquet and concert hall of the St. Andrew's Society and voted to secede from the United States. Thereafter, the hall became known as Secession Hall. President James Buchanan declared the act illegal, as did President-elect Lincoln, but it did not quell the tide. Mississippi was next to secede, on January 9, 1861, followed the next day by Florida and by Alabama the day after that. By February 1, Georgia, Louisiana and Texas had also seceded. But the states of the upper south remained in the Union, with Virginians voting two-to-one against secession just eight days before the bombardment of Fort Sumter.